GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:212
ANSWERED ON:18.02.2009
MEDICINAL PLANTS ON THE VERGE OF EXTINCTION
Nikhil Kumar Shri

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Medicinal Plants are on the verge of extinction;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SMT. PANABAKA LAKSHMI)

(a) & (b): No, Sir. However, the medicinal plants, like other groups of plants and animals, are threatened largely due to degradation of forests owing to various anthropogenic factors.

(c): The Ministry of Environment & Forests formulates policies for protection of forests. The Indian Forest Act, 1927 and the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 have provisions for protection of forests and wildlife, including medicinal plants. The National Biodiversity Act, 2002 regulates the access to forest resources, including medicinal plants. The Ministry of Environment & Forests is also supporting a number of projects on conservation by setting up Medicinal Plants Conservation Areas (MPCAs) that are primarily located in forest areas. Plantation of medicinal plants in degraded forest lands is supported through schemes of the National Afforestation & Eco-development Board (NAEB), Ministry of Environment & Forests.

Government has also set up Medicinal Plants Board to coordinate matters relating to medicinal plants with Ministries/ Departments and other stakeholders for ensuring availability of medicinal plants of quality to the industry on a sustained basis.

The Board has undertaken various programmes for conservation and development of medicinal plants. Central assistance is provided under the following schemes:

i) "Central Sector Scheme for Conservation, Development and Sustainable Management of Medicinal Plants"
The activities for which assistance is provided are as under:
Survey, Inventorisation and In-situ conservation of rare, endangered and threatened species of medicinal plants and setting up Medicinal Plants Conservation Areas (MPCAs)
Ex-situ Conservation / Resource augmentation of Rare, Endangered and Threatened (RET) and prioritized species in high demand
Support to Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs)/ Panchayats / Van Panchayats for value addition, warehousing and marketing
Research, Development, Quality and Certification
Promotional activities like setting up school herbal gardens, home herbal gardens
Capacity building and training programmes for primary collectors, farmers and other stakeholders

ii) "Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National Mission on Medicinal Plants"

The activities for which assistance is provided are as under:

Nursery development
Cultivation of prioritized plants required by the industry
Post harvest management
Marketing
Setting up quality testing laboratories
Setting up/ upgradation of herbal mandies
Crop insurance
Organic certification